

Case Study: Diversity Products

Features

- Uses Symbol scanners (WinCE) for shop-floor data collection
- Simple, context-based menus make the system quick to learn and use
- Full validation of serial numbers and locations
- Integration with 3rd-party web site for remote monitoring and reporting
- User log-in to track events by employee
- Open architecture and database

OnSite™ for Container Tracking

CRITICAL BUSINESS ISSUES

Diversity Products offers customized packaging solutions to a range of customers, including automotive suppliers. To meet the needs of this market, Diversity's services include the design and manufacture of containers for specialized applications, as well as post-delivery management and maintenance of those containers for its clients.

MFI, a Diversity partner with locations in the United States and Mexico, performs these post-delivery services. The company ships containers to the supplier on demand, receives them back from the manufacturer, and inspects, cleans, and repairs them as needed.

Since manufacturers and suppliers typically work with just-in-time (JIT) inventory, MFI must schedule the movement of containers precisely:

production depends on part flow. Also, many of MFI's services are charged by the piece, so it is critical to the company's revenue to record and report each time a container is handled, including what maintenance was performed.

Initially, MFI tracked information by hand, manually typing quantities, locations, and services into a database. This process was inefficient and prone to error, resulting in lost containers, incorrect shipments, and missed revenue opportunities. Facing significant growth, it was clear that Diversity needed a more accurate and efficient process.

SOLUTION

Diversity worked with Cimulus to define a process for MFI to accurately track its containers. Based on this design, Cimulus created a system using OnSite, a data collection platform designed specifically for manufacturing and industrial applications. This new system allowed MFI to use the container's existing barcode labels, combined with Diversity's custom labels and badges, to record locations, movement, and services with minimal effort by its employees.

OnSite provided the features needed to make the solution work: wireless communication with portable scanners, context-driven transactions based on login and work area, and integration with 3rd-party software. Now, containers are scanned as they are received, shipped, and moved between stations. IDs are automatically validated, process steps enforced, and every service performed is recorded.

BENEFITS

Improved efficiency and accuracy allowed Diversity to offer substantially improved service to its clients, including real-time inventory and locating services via the Web. Customer service calls were reduced and better management of services has allowed MFI to invoice for more services and with better accuracy.

Dave Brown, CIO at Diversity Products in Madison Heights, MI, said "The system made it so much easier to track containers that we're no longer concerned about increasing our volume. It installed more easily than we'd expected, and it's been working flawlessly since launch."

